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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to determine the feasibility of using the Teacher Performance Assessment Instruments (TPAI) to evaluate student teacher performance in northern Nevada by a more accurate and mutually acceptable method. Developed and validated by the University of Georgia, passing the TPAI is required for teacher certification in Georgia. The TPAI consists of three instruments for rating teacher competencies: (1) Teaching Plans and Materials; (2) Classroom Procedures; and (3) Interpersonal Skills. Ninety secondary student teachers, their cooperating teachers, and five university supervisors completed the TPAI near the end of an 8-week student teacher practicum. Significant correlations among the ratings of all triad members indicated the TPAI can be used as envisioned to improve both the preparation and evaluation of student teachers. (BS)

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Running Head: TPAI in Northern Nevada

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An Adaptation of the

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in a Teacher Preparation Program in Northern Nevada

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Running Head: TPAI in Northern Nevada

Abstract

Secondary student teachers, their cooperating teachers and university supervisors participated in a study in Northern Nevada designed to determine the feasibility of using the Teacher Performance Assessment Instruments in order to evaluate student teacher performance by a more accurate and mutually acceptable method. It was found that since all members of the triad rated the student teachers approximately the same, the TPAI could be used as envisioned.

An Adaptation of the
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A critical issue in the evaluation of student teachers revolves about the relationship among the university supervisor, the classroom cooperating teacher and the student teacher. Ideally, each member of this triad should have substantial input into the assessment process. However, as obvious as this need for close collaboration may seem, McIntyre and Norris (1980) found in a survey of 710 schools that in nearly 53 per cent of the cases the university supervisor or the cooperating teacher alone determined a final grade for the student teacher, and that in only seven per cent of the cases did the pre-service teachers themselves have any input. Zimpher et al, (1980) found that it was the supervisor who set the tenor of the student teaching experience. Neither the cooperating teacher nor the student teacher went beyond the expectations set by the university supervisor nor did either place much value on the pre-teaching observation period.

One important conclusion that can be drawn from these and similar studies is that student teachers are not being systematically encouraged to evaluate themselves as a means of developing their skills in the classroom. While Jones (1981) acknowledges that such self-assessment is valuable for the improvement of instruction, she points out a likely reason for its widespread lack--without specific guidelines and considerable experience in using them, teachers at any level are unlikely to focus on relevant aspects of their instructional behavior.

In Northern Nevada, for some time we had felt a need for an instrument that would provide guidelines establishing a common basis for evaluation among the members of the triad and, beyond this specific function alert potential

teachers early in their preparation programs to the necessary competencies and skills they will have to demonstrate during their student teaching practica.

Background

Modern research establishing the relationship of competencies to classroom performance dates back to the early 1970s (Dodl, Powell, et al, 1973; Powell, 1972). Current professional literature and research findings also reveal agreement that success in teaching can be objectively assessed with reliable and appropriately validated instruments (Elam, 1971; Brophy, 1973). Of particular importance to the process of developing such instruments was the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (BTES), a project carried out during the 1970's, which states that effective teaching includes diagnosis, prescription, presentation, monitoring, and feedback (Fisher, Berliner, et al, 1978). Among the questions that the project group used in a teacher function checklist were: 1) Are lessons structured for students with a statement of objectives or expectations? 2) Do you [the teacher] involve students in the presentation by asking questions? 3) Are group presentation and individual practice directly related? 4) Are presentations fast-paced and momentum sustained? and 5) Are students given feedback and rewarded? (Romberg, 1979)

For over a decade, needs assessment commissions, special task groups and legislation in the State of Georgia have made concerted efforts to recommend conditions and procedures by which objective assessment of teaching performance could be done in a "real" classroom environment. As a result, state funding was granted the University of Georgia to develop an evaluative tool known as the Teacher Performance Assessment Instruments (TPAI).

Conceptual development of the TPAI began in early Spring 1976 (Johnson, Ellett and Capie, 1980), resulting from a review of the literature and numerous studies relating to professional competencies of teachers. As a result,

a survey form was developed to solicit responses from "a stratified sample of 4,668 subjects, including college/university professors, administrators and classroom teachers throughout the State of Georgia." (p. 1) A subsequent team decision led to the construction of a five-part instrument to assess generic teaching competencies that could apply across grade levels and any subject matter being taught. The instruments comprising the TPAI are:

1. Teaching Plans and Materials (TPM)
2. Classroom Procedures (CP)
3. Interpersonal Skills (IS)

The Teaching Plans and Materials instrument consists of five competencies and fifteen indicators; the Classroom procedures instrument is composed of six competencies and twenty indicators; and the Interpersonal Skills instrument has three competencies and ten indicators. For each indicator the TPM, CP, and IS are scored on a 1-5 point scale by data collectors who observe the classroom teacher's performance. In order to establish objective measures of "on the job" performance, each classroom teacher is assessed by trained data collectors over a period of four to five days scheduled during fall and spring.

Investigations on the reliability of the TPAI have been conducted using videotaped and live teaching performances in the classroom. Studies of inter-rater agreement in both settings and internal consistency analysis provide evidence of the reliability of the TPAI. Classroom agreement rates of 85-90% have been reported. Alpha values in excess of .80 are common (Capie, Ellett, and Johnson, 1979).

Content validity of the TPAI was examined in Georgia through a statewide experts' opinion study which verified the skills, their indicators, and descriptions as essential for teaching (Johnson, et al, 1978. Criterion-related validity has been investigated by correlating elementary and secondary teachers'

TPAI scores with a variety of criterion variables, such as pupil achievement on standardized tests and on teacher-made tests as well as observation of students' on-task behavior. Criterion-related validity has also been investigated by correlating TPAI scores with measures of students' perceptions of school climate and learning environment (Ellett, et al, 1978).

Successful passing of the TPAI at the 75% level is now required for obtaining all teaching certificates in the State of Georgia. To these researchers' knowledge, studies to determine the effectiveness of the TPAI in evaluating student teaching performance outside the State of Georgia are minimal.[1]

Description of Study

In Northern Nevada, during the period from March, 1982, through May, 1984, 90 secondary student teachers, their cooperating teachers, and five university supervisors participated in a study designed to gather data on the feasibility of using the principal categories of the TPAI in order to assess student teacher performance by a more accurate and detailed method.[2] More specifically, our purpose was to evaluate and discover ways to improve student teachers' abilities in the areas of preparing instructional plans and materials, implementing successful classroom procedures and improving interpersonal skills. The instruments were completed by all three groups near the end of an eight-week student teaching practicum.

A comparison was made between the rating assigned to the student teachers by their university supervisors, by their cooperating teachers, and by the student teachers themselves. This comparison indicated differences in perceptions of the raters. Data were tabulated and analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment correlations and "t" tests to determine the effectiveness of the program.

The instrument used in the project consisted of the following 13 major categories[3], on which the student teacher was rated on a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest):

A. Teaching Plans and Materials

1. Plans instruction to achieve selected objectives.
2. Organizes instruction to take into account individual differences among learners.
3. Obtains and uses information about the needs and progress of individual learners.
4. Obtains and uses information about the effectiveness of instruction and revises it when necessary.

B. Classroom Procedures

5. Uses instructional techniques, methods, and media related to the objectives.
6. Communicates with learners.
7. Demonstrates a repertoire of teaching methods.
8. Reinforces and encourages learner involvement in instruction.
9. Demonstrates an understanding of the school subject being taught and demonstrates its relevance.
10. Organizes time, space, materials, and equipment for instruction.

C. Interpersonal Skills

11. Demonstrates enthusiasm for teaching and learning and the subjects taught.
12. Helps learners develop positive self-concepts.
13. Manages classroom interactions.

Analysis of Data

The ratings given each student teacher in the 13 categories were totaled and the mean determined for each. These means are listed in Table I.

Table I about here.

Pearson Product Moment Correlations were calculated to determine whether or not significant correlations existed. (See Table II)

Place Table II about here.

In addition to the correlations, "t" tests were run to determine whether or not the difference in the means were significant. (See Table III)

Place Table III about here.

To determine whether or not there were significant differences in any of the three major instrument categories--Teaching Plans and Materials, Classroom Procedures, and Interpersonal Skills-- mean scores, "t" values, and significance levels were computed for each of these categories. (See Tables IV and V)

Place Tables IV and V about here.

Discussion

The data show that student teachers rated their teaching performance only slightly higher than did either the cooperating teachers or the university supervisors, and that the ratings given by cooperating teachers and university supervisors were very similar (means of 4.22 and 4.24, respectively) and significantly correlated at the .01 level. Further, "t" tests showed no significant difference between how cooperating teachers, student teachers, and university supervisors rated the overall performance.

Because all of the members of the triad rated the student teacher approximately the same, it is likely that the instrument can be employed in the way originally envisioned; that is, it can be utilized to provide a common basis for meaningful evaluation which is acceptable to everyone concerned. And, as

a further benefit, it has the potential for allaying some of the uncertainty and tension inherent in both student teaching and preparing to student teach. Presumably future student teachers could better expend their energies by readying themselves to demonstrate the competencies specified in the instrument. As noted previously, it could be introduced as early as possible in a preservice teacher preparation sequence; e.g. in general or specific methods courses. If this were done, students could begin to extract from such courses the competencies they will need to demonstrate during the practicum.

An analogy comes from the field of medicine, where researchers have found that patients facing a major operation were calmer and recovered faster if they were acquainted with the procedures beforehand. For example, patients about to receive an artificial hip are routinely asked to view a sound-slide program which explains operative procedures as well as pre- and post-care.

In order to apply the instrument to best advantage during the practicum, we envision two conferences--the first early in the student teaching experience in order to discuss informally perceived strengths and weaknesses using the items merely as a guideline, and a second at the end of student teaching in order to allow the cooperating teacher and the student teacher him/herself to suggest needed improvement and strategies for handling a "real" teaching position. Our assumption is that since the TPAI were validated with beginning teachers in Georgia, student teachers who have mastered the areas covered in the instruments will make a smoother transition from student teaching to regular teaching.

Footnotes

1. The authors wish to thank John Powell of the University of Georgia TPAI Project for persmission to use a condensed version of the Teacher Performance Assessment Instruments.

2. This research study was conducted under a grant from the Research Advisory Board of the University of Nevada, Reno.

3. Readers interested in receiving the detailed instrument are invited to contact the authors.

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TABLE I

Mean Rating (Total Scores) of Student Teachers

Rater Group	Mean
Cooperating teachers	4.22
Student teachers (self evaluation)	4.31
College supervisors	4.24

n = 90; maximum score = 5

TABLE II

Correlations Between Raters

Category	r Value	Significance Level
Between cooperating teachers and student teachers	.098	not significant
Between cooperating teachers and college supervisors	.559	significant at .01 level
Between student teachers and college supervisors	.145	not significant

Table III

Significance Levels Between Raters

Category	t Value	Significance Level
Between cooperating teachers and student teachers	.56	not significant
Between cooperating teachers and college supervisors	.13	not significant
Between student teachers and college supervisors	.47	not significant

TABLE IV

Mean Rating of Student Teachers
(Teaching Plans and Materials)

Rater Group	Mean
Cooperating teachers	4.18
Student teachers	4.27
College supervisors	4.21

Mean Rating of Student Teachers
(Classroom Procedures)

Rater Group	Mean
Cooperating teachers	4.37
Student teachers	4.39
College supervisors	4.23

Mean Rating of Student Teachers
(Interpersonal Skills)

Rater Group	Mean
Cooperating teachers	4.06
Student teachers	4.28
College supervisors	4.26

TABLE V

"t" Values and Significance Levels Between Raters

Category	Teaching Plans		Classroom Procedure		Interpersonal Skills	
	t value	Sign Level	t value	Sign Level	t value	Sign Level
Between cooperating teachers & student teachers	.49	not sign	.08	not sign	1.45	not sign
Between cooperating teachers & college supervisors	.11	not sign	.76	not sign	1.34	not sign
Between student teachers & college supervisors	.23	not sign	.81	not sign	.08	not sign